

FORMATION OF A FOREST MANAGEMENT TASK GROUP ACTION TAB FOR BOARD

08/23/22

ISSUE: LHCC has had a documented Lake Management Plan as part of the Master Plan for several years that is managed and updated by the Lake Committee. Our forested areas, streams and tributaries have an impact on our lake, however, we lack a forest stewardship approach for the careful and responsible management of forestland to ensure the health and long-term viability of our natural resources.

LHCC desires to sustain our forestland, improve forest health, encourage regeneration of native forest trees and plants, minimize the growth of invasive plants, create and improve our wildlife habitat, and improve the aesthetics common area property, especially surrounding the lake.

BACKGROUND: In the summer of 2021, Board directors, Building, Grounds and Safety Advisory (BG&SA) and Master Planning Committee members met with Mike Wolf, Appalachian Forest Consultants, and a representative of the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources to evaluate our forest resources.

Both experts stated that it is important to set our goals for what we want to do with our forested land. A healthy forest should have a healthy overstory and understory that is sustainable, resilient and resistant to invasive species.

The experts also discussed options for seeking federal and state cost-share assistance programs, applying for reduced cost native tree seedlings, and engaging the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources foresters regarding contractors who can implement management practices.

RECOMMENDATION: Form a joint Forest Management Task Group, comprised of members of LHCC's Master Planning, Building, Grounds and Safety Advisory (BG&SA) and Lake Committees.

The objective is to document the health of our forestland, establish forest practices based on expert recommendations, establish long-term goals and objectives, and then act on forest stewardship methodologies. The plan will include an inventory and assessment of existing resources, recommendations for courses of action and budget requirements for retaining the services of forest experts and any planned reforestation and repopulation of wildflower meadows.

By establishing a direction for our forestland, we will know what to expect, how the forest should react to management practices, and define a vision of what forest management success will be for our community, both now and well into the future.

SUMMARY: A Forest Management Plan will serve as a guide and help LHCC's committees and board make decisions, evaluate options, and sustain our forestland for future generations.

PROPOSED MOTION(S) or ACTION(S):

Approve the establishment of a Forest Management Task Group with representatives from Master Planning, BG&SA and Lake Committee members.

SPONSOR: Cathy Melcher, Chair, LHCC Master Planning Committee